

Anurag Agrawal to Give Founders' Memorial Lecture at Ent Soc 2013 – Austin, Texas



Lanham, MD; February 13, 2013 -- Dr. Anurag Agrawal, a professor of ecology and evolutionary biology with a joint appointment in the Department of Entomology at Cornell University, has been selected to deliver the Founders' Memorial Award lecture at Entomology 2013, the 61st Annual Meeting of the Entomological Society of America (ESA) to be held in Austin, Texas, November 10-13, 2013.

At each ESA Annual Meeting, the recipient of this award addresses the conferees to honor the memory and career of an outstanding entomologist. This year's honoree is Dame Miriam Rothschild (1908-2005), who will be the subject of Dr. Agrawal's presentation.

Dr. Agrawal's research accomplishments cover the key areas of arthropod community genetics, real-time evolution of plant defense against insects, phylogenetic ecology, plant neighborhood-insect interactions, and insect colonization and induced defense. Over the course of his career to date, he has published more than 100 peer-reviewed papers in high-profile journals such as PNAS, Science, and Nature, and he has edited two key books on insect ecology.

In the relatively new area of arthropod community genetics, he has addressed natural selection on milkweed defensive traits and how plant genetic variation in these traits influences insect community structure and coexistence. In the area of real time evolution of plant defenses against insects, he has shown that the suppression of insect damage causes the evolution of decreased plant resistance and increased competitive ability. His work in the area of phylogenetic ecology uses a comparative biology approach to address problems ranging from the controls on the success of invasive species to phylogenetic signatures of coevolution. And in the area of plant neighborhood-insect interactions, his ongoing research seeks to partition the relative importance of direct, associational, and trait-mediated effects of competing plants on milkweed and its insect fauna.

DAME MIRIAM ROTHSCHILD

Dame Rothschild started her research in the 1950s in the area that is now known as chemical ecology. She had no traditional education, but was tutored in natural history by her father and her uncle.

She is best known for her work with mimicry, and she conducted classic studies on the role of carotenoids in insect mimicry. In addition to her work cataloging the famous Rothschild flea collection, Dame Rothschild was also a pioneer in the area of insect chemical ecology. Her work in particular on mimicry and sequestration of toxic compounds by insects was outstanding. Nature conservation was extremely important to her, and she lobbied strongly in favor of nature reserves.

Nearly 3,000 entomologists are expected to attend Entomology 2013. For more information, please visit <http://www.entsoc.org/entomology2013>. The Entomological Society of America (ESA) is the largest organization in the world serving the professional and scientific needs of entomologists and people in related disciplines. Founded in 1889, ESA today has more than 6,000 members affiliated with educational institutions, health agencies, private industry, and government. Members are students, researchers, teachers, extension service personnel, administrators, marketing representatives, research technicians, consultants, and hobbyists. For more information, please visit <http://www.entsoc.org>.